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Open Caskets and Powdered Lime

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Open Caskets and Powdered Lime:

how the shocking staging of death advances transitional justice in Rwanda

Abstract

The Rwandan Genocide against the Tutsi produced statewide instability which the insurgent RPF sought to mitigate once in power. As part of their transitional justice initiatives, the RPF frequently utilized unique forms of corporeal memorialization, including the frequently shocking preservation and presentation of posthumous bodies to visitors at memorial sites. As a former visitor to such memorial sites as part of a field study, the author sought to understand why this form of necropolitics is, nonetheless, an integral aspect of the Rwandan transitional justice project. Through conducting a literature review, this paper discerned that corporeal memorialization is essential to transitional justice in Rwanda in three respects: for its ability to deter future violence through truth-telling; ensure acknowledgement of the crime of genocide through its educative effect; and, catalyze healing by providing an opportunity for remembrance. The paper also clarifies the limits of corporeal memorialization, particularly the necessity for corpses to be unidentifiable to avoid retraumatizing survivors and upsetting victims' families. Although it is a flawed process, corporeal memorialization has still been indispensable to the recovery of the Rwandan state and peoples. This research is important for its ability to renounce widespread Western critiques of the Rwandan transitional justice project and better understand the wide scope of measures available to states engaging in processes of post-conflict reconstruction.

Murambi Technical School was once a place of learning and development for the children of its town. In 1994, however, its grounds were drastically transformed into a site of refuge for many fleeing the violence of the Rwandan Genocide Against the Tutsi ('Genocide'). Today, the school serves a memorial for the 50,000 to 60,000 Tutsis who lost their lives there during the violence. The Murambi Genocide Memorial, as it is now called, is amongst the many memorial sites which make up the contemporary Rwandan landscape. What distinguishes Murambi from many of the other Genocide memorials in the state, however, is its presentation of exhumed and mummified human remains for public consumption. The presentation of human remains, nonetheless, is not an uncommon sight at Genocide memorials in Rwanda. Although the prospect of such corporeal memorialization often provokes feelings of discomfort, this form of remembrance has been integral to the Rwandan transitional justice project. In particular, the memorialization of posthumous human remains is essential at the domestic level for the purposes of remembrance and education and at the international level for its role in clarifying truth. This is not to say, however, that corporeal memorialization cannot simultaneously be damaging or detract from the goals of post-conflict reconstruction. This paper seeks to clarify how corporeal memorialization has advanced justice in Rwanda and identify the limits of such an initiative. Overall, this paper asserts that the corporeal memorialization of unidentifiable human remains in the Rwandan context can and has been beneficial for the advancement of healing, acknowledgement, and deterrence. Prior to elaborating further on the matter, this paper commences by contextualizing corporeal commemoration within the broader Rwandan transitional justice framework.

Corporeal Memorialization and the Rwandan Transitional Justice Context

Rwanda has a long history of ethnic conflict and violence predominantly between those perceived of as Tutsi versus those perceived of as Hutu. Following the death of President Juvenal Habyarimana in April 1994, ethnic tensions in Rwanda boiled over and manifested in a Hutu Power-inspired extermination of 800,000 Tutsis and 50,000 Hutus alleged to be Tutsi sympathizers.¹ Murder aside, the violence was also characterized by rape, mutilation, arson, and other forms of abuse.² The conflict only subsided when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) succeeded in their insurgency against the sitting government and took formal control of the state.³ Post-genocide, the RPF sought to consolidate their power and pursue a robust process of reconstruction. This involved some deplorable acts such as the neutralization of oppositional political parties, but also commendable ones such as political, economic, social and cultural re-engineering.⁴ These goals were all pursued with the intention of advancing transitional justice, re-educating the masses, disassociating Rwandans with ethnic identity, and reforming territory.⁵

Although the Genocide is largely recognized as historical fact, genocide denialism is nonetheless an issue that troubles the RPF government. Denialism manifests in various forms in the Rwandan context, from disputing the intent to exterminate the Tutsis to claiming that the death tolls are grossly exaggerated.⁶ Denial is not only advanced by former perpetrators and members of

¹ Rowland Brucken, "Encyclopedia of Military Science," in *Encyclopedia of Military Science* (Thousand Oaks, US: SAGE Publications, Ltd., 2013), 1245–46.

² Brucken, "Encyclopedia of Military Science," 1246.

³ Filip Reyntjens, "Understanding Rwandan Politics through the Longue Durée: from the Precolonial to the Post-Genocide Era," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 12, no. 3 (April 12, 2018), 520.

⁴ Reyntjens, "Understanding Rwandan Politics through the Longue Durée," 520–21.

⁵ Reyntjens, "Understanding Rwandan Politics through the Longue Durée," 521.

⁶ Israel Charny, "Templates for Gross Denial of a Known Genocide: A Manual," in *The Encyclopedia of Genocide*, (Santa Barbara, US: ABC-CLIO, 2000), 168.

the extremist Hutu Power, but also by members of the international community who were complicit in the violence, such as unrepentant devotees of the Roman Catholic Church, high-ranking French military members, and Congolese government officials.⁷ The Rwandan government remains committed to challenging such denialism because, per genocide studies scholar Dr. Gregory H. Stanton, denial is the final stage of a successful genocide.⁸ Denialism is especially dangerous due to its ability to erase the memory of violence, further demonize the victims, and provide impunity to the perpetrators.⁹

In light of the aforementioned history, context, and challenges, the transitional justice project in Rwanda has not only been focused on reconciliation and rehabilitation, but also education and countering genocide denialism. These goals have informed the expression of reconstructive measures. To attain these goals, Rwanda has most notably revived indigenous grassroots legal forums (gacaca courts) amongst other judicial measures,¹⁰ but has also pursued educational reform¹¹ and, as is the subject of this paper, corporeal memorialization. Corporeal memorialization, when implemented respectfully, has exceptional utility in deterring future violence, building acknowledgement, and promoting healing. These goals are essential to the

⁷ Samuel Totten, Henry Theriault, and Elisa Von Joeden-Forgey, *Controversies in the Field of Genocide Studies* (London, GB: Routledge, 2017), 154.

⁸ Gregory H. Stanton, “10 Stages of Genocide,” in *Genocide Watch*, 2016, <http://genocidewatch.net/genocide-2/8-stages-of-genocide/>.

⁹ Peter Balakian, “Op-Ed: On Armenian Genocide, Go Ahead and Offend Turkey,” in *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 2015, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-balakian-genocide-20150416-story.html>.

¹⁰ Cyanne E. Loyle, “Transitional Justice and Political Order in Rwanda,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41, no. 4 (October 31, 2017), 663–80.

¹¹ Denise Bantovato, “Accounting for Genocide: Transitional Justice, Mass (Re)Education and the Pedagogy of Truth in Present-Day Rwanda,” *Comparative Education* 53, no. 3 (June 16, 2017), 396–417.

success of transitional justice in Rwanda due to their ability to redress legacies of human rights violations and ensure national stability and unity as time evolves.

Importantly, corporeal memorialization is not the only mechanism by which the aforementioned ends can be met. For example, with respect to deterrence, this can also be achieved through demilitarization, democratization, and the establishment of rule of law.¹² This paper maintains that corporeal memorialization is not a substitute but a compliment for other forms of transitional justice. In order to understand why, it is important for one to recognize the unique considerations which inform the transitional justice project in Rwanda (as was subject to analysis above). In particular, corporeal memorialization is especially salient due to the aspiration of the RPF to counter genocide denialism.

Prior to elaborating further, the scope of corporeal memorialization must be clarified. For the purposes of this paper, corporeal memorialization refers to the processes by which human remains are exhumed, preserved, and presented in order to preserve memories. Although no succinct definition of such a phenomenon exists, this definition was produced by applying leading definitions of memorialization to a corporeal context. Importantly, such memorialization can occur in tandem with other forms of remembrance such as the preservation and presentation of recovered personal effects of those lost, ceremonies, and addresses, for example. In practice, corporeal memorialization in Rwanda has been implemented as part of the larger project of memorialization and pursuit of justice in the state.

¹² Alexander Testa, Joseph K. Young, and Christopher Mullins, “Does Democracy Enhance or Reduce Lethal Violence? Examining the Role of the Rule of Law,” *Homicide Studies* 21, no. 3 (2017), 219, 233–35.

Corporeal Memorialization as Healing

Most obviously perhaps, corporeal memorialization in Rwanda helps to advance transitional justice by allowing for nationwide healing. It does so by providing two opportunities for survivors and witnesses to reconcile with the atrocities of the Genocide: to remember and to contribute to reconstruction. With respect to the former, the nature of the violence necessitated that memory in Rwanda is largely corporeal.¹³ Post-conflict, the bodies of victims were scattered across the Rwandan landscape with witnesses describing the state as a “giant open-air cemetery” and survivors tend to remember the conflict in terms of death.¹⁴ Due to this fact, human remains provide the most tangible reminder of the Genocide. By creating a physical space where the violence of genocide is explicitly visible, corporeal memorials create opportunities for remembrance of genocide-related deaths and, in turn, healing.¹⁵

In order to be beneficial for remembrance of the Genocide, however, a corpse’s ability to memorialize hinges on the identifications it is (un)able to illicit between itself and the viewer. The success of genocide requires the erasure of the agency and recognition of the humanity of its victims. Therefore, remembrance of the nature of genocide also necessitates non-identification between corpse and humanity to be successful.¹⁶ Certainly, the identification of bodies promotes the remembrance of individual lives, but the displaying of corpses en masse with no identifying markers at memorial sites is particularly helpful for the remembrance of the larger conflict and of

¹³ Ayala Maurer-Prager, “(Re)Cognising the Corpse: Individuality, Identification and Multidirectional Memorialisation in Post-Genocide Rwanda,” in *Human Remains in Society: Curation and Exhibition in the Aftermath of Genocide and Mass-Violence* (Manchester, GB: Manchester University Press, 2016), 114.

¹⁴ Amanda F. Grzyb, “Unsettled Memory: Genocide Memorial Sites in Rwanda,” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 25, no. 2 (2019), 187.

¹⁵ Maurer-Prager, “(Re)Cognising the Corpse,” 122.

¹⁶ Maurer-Prager, “(Re)Cognising the Corpse,” 119.

all the lives lost – not simply those who has the privilege of being remembered by survivors.¹⁷ In this vein, unidentifiable corporeal memorialization is also useful for the many survivors whose lost loves ones cannot and have not been identified because survivors are able to project the memories of lost loved ones onto the corpses. Simply put, it is the impossibility of direct identification at corporeal memorial sites that produces the most appropriate commemoration to genocidal violence.

The efficacy of corporeal memorialization is damaged when a corpse can be identified not only because it signifies an erasure of the scope of violence as explored above, but because it can be traumatizing for survivors and thus hinder healing. In order to sustain their own identities and self-preserve, survivors often refuse to identify with corpses on a human level.¹⁸ This is because the sight of genocide victims often reminds survivors of the fragility of their own lives.¹⁹ In addition to the rich academic research which exists to substantiate this claim, anecdotal evidence may solidify this assertion. Consider the story of Janvier Munyaneza, who was 14 during the Genocide. Munyaneza states that ‘speaking of’ and identifying corpses ‘offends [survivors’] spirits by showing to survivors just how fragile their lives were and reminds them of how they could have died.’²⁰ The identification of corpses, therefore, hinders the ability of corporeal memorialization to advance healing by individualizing remembrance and retraumatizing survivors. Corporeal memorialization is only helpful for the purposes of remembrance when bodies cannot be identified. Simultaneously fortunately and unfortunately, the direct identification of bodies is nearly

¹⁷ Maurer-Prager, “(Re)Cognising the Corpse,” 122.

¹⁸ Maurer-Prager, “(Re)Cognising the Corpse,” 120–21.

¹⁹ Maurer-Prager, “(Re)Cognising the Corpse,” 120–21.

²⁰ Maurer-Prager, “(Re)Cognising the Corpse,” 120–21.

impossible due to the lack of financial resources or DNA systems available to the Rwandan government.²¹

In addition to allowing for remembrance, sites of corporeal memorialization also allow for healing by engaging survivors in the process of memorialization. Foremost, survivor groups have been at the foreground of the construction of memorials due to a precedent set in 1995 when a community came together to form a corporeal memorial site in Nyamasheke.²² Local memorials in 2010, in fact, reached a height of over 500.²³ Once memorials are established, survivors often also plays a role in gathering corpses and preparing them for display.²⁴ Participating in the process of corporeal memorialization assists with the healing of survivors by allowing them to meet personal post-conflict needs. In the words of the executive secretary of the Ibuka memorial, who survived the genocide in Bugesera, engaging in the memorialization processes helps a survivor to fulfill their own personal ‘mission.’²⁵ Therefore, corporeal memorialization is useful for post-Genocidal healing by allowing for the remembrance of mass violence and by allowing survivors to contribute to reconstruction.

Corporeal Memorialization as Acknowledgement

Corporeal memorialization in Rwanda has also been indispensable to acknowledging the fact of genocide occurring in 1994. Acknowledgement is a central post-conflict need if societies

²¹ Karin Wright, “‘Clothes of the Dead’ from Crushed Bodies a Chilling Reminder of Rwanda Genocide,” in *The Daily Mirror*, April 5, 2019, <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/clothes-dead-crushed-bodies-chilling-14238009>.

²² Rachel Ibreck, “The Politics of Mourning: Survivor Contributions to Memorials in Post-Genocide Rwanda,” *Memory Studies* 3, no. 4 (September 27, 2010), 334.

²³ Ibreck, “The Politics of Mourning,” 334.

²⁴ Ibreck, “The Politics of Mourning,” 337.

²⁵ Ibreck, “The Politics of Mourning,” 338.

are to rebuild trust, dignify victims, and sow the seeds of reconciliation.²⁶ Although important for and interrelated with deterrence, it also assists in ensuring accountability and the viability of national unity. In light of historical social fractures and high levels of participation in the Genocide,²⁷ this goal is largely informed by the pervasive issue of genocide denialism. Corporeal memorialization contributes to the acknowledgment of the fact of the Genocide at both the domestic and international levels. It does so by substantiating state-sponsored public truths by providing uncontestable evidence.

The post-Genocide reconstruction and promotion of national unity under the guise of a central national identity ('banyarwanda') required radical education-sector reform.²⁸ Biased textbooks and curricula have been removed from the education system, entrance to secondary schools have been depoliticized, and examinations are proctored prejudice-free now, for example.²⁹ Education is being used as an explicit mechanism of transitional justice to foster social cohesion, national unity, and reconciliation.³⁰ Central to the success of these reforms is the advancement of a uniform public truth narrative which is advanced outside of formal education settings, such as trials, tribunals, commemorations, and memorials.³¹ While public truths are distinct from popular truths and have their own unique controversies and considerations, the advancement of a public truth has been indispensable to the transitional justice project in Rwanda. Given the fact that bones (and other human remains) are often perceived of as the most powerful

²⁶ Joanna R. Quinn, "Mad Science? Possibilities for and Examples of Synthetic (Neo)Traditional Practices of Justice and Acknowledgement," *Air & Space Power Journal - Africa and Francophonie* 5, no. 3 (2014), 48–62.

²⁷ Ibreck, "The Politics of Mourning," 331.

²⁸ Marian Hodgkin, "Reconciliation in Rwanda: Education, History, and the State," *Journal of International Affairs* 60, no. 1 (2006), 202.

²⁹ Hodgkin, "Reconciliation in Rwanda," 202.

³⁰ Hodgkin, "Reconciliation in Rwanda," 205.

³¹ Hodgkin, "Reconciliation in Rwanda," 204.

evidence of atrocity, they are integral to the establishment of collective memories and truths.³² Therefore, by contributing to the public truth, corporeal commemoration supports the endeavour of the government to acknowledge the devastation of the Genocide.

At the international level, too, does corporeal memorialization acknowledge the crime of genocide. Aegis Trust estimates situate the number of international visitors to Kigali's corporeal memorials at 40,000 in 2011 alone.³³ The Rwandan tourism industry only continues to grow, as evidenced by the steady increases in number of visitors to the state per year.³⁴ Just as sites of corporeal memorialization present an opportunity for Rwandans to acknowledge the crimes of the Genocide, so too does it present an opportunity for international visitors. For such visitors, corporeal memorialization instills a sense of awareness of this crime against humanity as well as a sense of guilt for apathy.³⁵ The materiality of the memorials has this ability due to visitors' cultural attitudes towards the presentation of deaths and their awareness of their status as a foreigner in the Rwandan state.³⁶ Therefore, corporeal memorialization creates not only acknowledgement of the Genocide at the international level, but also acknowledgement of the international community's complacency. In fact, a recognition of this complacency and the resultant guilt from witnessing corporeal memorialization is a driving factor which leads international donors to contribute back to these memorials.³⁷ Per the United Nations, contributions

³² Amanda F. Grzyb, "Unsettled Memory," 196.

³³ Clare Spencer, "The Rise of Genocide Memorials," in *BBC News*, June 11, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-16642344>.

³⁴ Hugh Morris, "Rwanda, Fresh from Its Deal with Arsenal, Announces Surge in UK Visitors," in *The Telegraph*, May 29, 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/africa/rwanda/articles/rwanda-increase-uk-visitors-arsenal/>.

³⁵ Annalisa Bolin, "On the Side of Light: Performing Morality at Rwanda's Genocide Memorials," *Journal of Conflict Archaeology* 7, no. 3 (September 2012), 201.

³⁶ Bolin, "On the Side of Light," 201.

³⁷ Rachel Ibreck, "International Constructions of National Memories: The Aims and Effects of Foreign Donors Support for Genocide Remembrance in Rwanda," *Journal of*

to Rwandan memorials came in wake of the moral character of the world and the status of the ‘international community’ coming into question.³⁸ For this reason, the main sources of development and transitional justice-related aid comes from those in the US, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden and Belgium.³⁹ Most sites of corporeal commemoration, therefore, have been paid for by international donors as a mechanism of acknowledging complacency.⁴⁰ Overall, corporeal memorialization has advanced acknowledgement of the Genocide at both domestic and international levels, thus contributing to the larger transitional justice project of the Rwandan state.

Corporeal Memorialization as Deterrence

In light of the aforementioned goals identified on page three, it is safe to deduce that another primary objective of the Rwandan transitional justice project is to avoid a relapse into conflict and to avoid any future instance of genocide. At both domestic and international levels, corporeal memorialization helps to advance such deterrence by clarifying the truth and promoting a human rights culture. With respect to the former, truth-telling has a broader mandate than acknowledgement; not only does it recognize the sheer occurrence of genocide, it recognizes a particular genocide’s unique nature. Truth-telling can effectively strengthen perceptions of group security.⁴¹ This is especially the case in regions divided over cultural and ethnic lines, where truth-telling can dampen the ability for ethnic scapegoating and fearmongering to reignite conflict.⁴² Establishing and advancing the truth after a contentious conflict, however, is difficult. In the

Intervention and Statebuilding 7, no. 2 (February 22, 2013), 165.

³⁸ Ibreck, “International Constructions of National Memories,” 155.

³⁹ Ibreck, “International Constructions of National Memories,” 155.

⁴⁰ Ibreck, “International Constructions of National Memories,” 153.

⁴¹ David Mendeloff, “Truth-Seeking, Truth-Telling, and Postconflict Peacebuilding: Curb the Enthusiasm?,” *International Studies Review* 6, no. 3 (September 2004), 375.

⁴² Mendeloff, “Truth-Seeking, Truth-Telling, and Postconflict Peacebuilding,” 375.

Rwandan context, the scale and longevity of violence as well as the contested nature of the conflict made this the case.⁴³ In response, the RPF pursued a top-down approach to truth whereby a narrative was set by government and administered below through memorials and memorialization, education, public addresses, commemorations, and legal processes.⁴⁴ Corporeal memorialization is exceptionally useful for helping non-witnesses understand the scope of the tragedy and learn from their apathy.

In the immediate aftermath of the Genocide, the remains of victims were scattered across Rwanda, with some buried and many exposed.⁴⁵ These corpses served as evidence of both the nature of the Genocide and the failure of the international community to respond to and stop the genocide.⁴⁶ The tours offered of memorials presenting exhumed bodies to media and political officials from the West indicate that the memorials are primarily oriented around providing physical evidence of genocide.⁴⁷ Evidence-based memorials, as they are called, are a popular tactic post-genocide to clarify and advance the truth. Both in Cambodia and Germany, they have been used to force observers to come to terms with the scale and nature of a given conflict.⁴⁸ Specific to the Rwandan context, scholar of the Genocide Laura Major has undertaken fieldwork which has concluded that, in fact, the preservation and presentation of remains drive national RPF political projects aiming to consolidate particular memories of the conflict.⁴⁹

⁴³ Hodgkin, “Reconciliation in Rwanda,” 199.

⁴⁴ Hodgkin, “Reconciliation in Rwanda,” 199, 204.

⁴⁵ Grzyb, “Unsettled Memory,” 187.

⁴⁶ Alison Desforges, *Genocide in Rwanda: the Planning and Execution of Mass Murder* (New York, US: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 73–4.

⁴⁷ Grzyb, “Unsettled Memory,” 188.

⁴⁸ Grzyb, “Unsettled Memory,” 188–9.

⁴⁹ Laura Major, “Unearthing, Untangling and Re-Articulating Genocide Corpses in Rwanda,” *Critical African Studies* 7, no. 2 (February 4, 2015), 164.

The deeds and rhetoric of the RPF government substantiate the above claims. Leading government administrators have stated that the corporeal memorialization project in Rwanda seeks to prevent future violence as the principle aim of preserving genocide sites.⁵⁰ Contemporary Rwandan laws also seem to indicate that the purposes of corporeal memorialization has been to advance truth. In 2007, the RPF inaugurated the National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG) with the express intention of confronting denial and advancing the ‘truth’ with the hopes of curtailing future instances of genocide.⁵¹ In 2008, the government created laws to advance the CNLG’s goal of reducing the number of corporeal memorials from 500 to 50, to ensure that smaller memorials would not be forgotten but also to ensure the CNLG was better able to control narratives of the Genocide.⁵² The CNLG’s strict regulation of memorial sites with victims’ remains indicate that these places of remembrance have strategic importance to the goals of confronting denialism and advancing truth and, in turn, deterrence of future instances of violence. The international donors who support the CNLG’s efforts, too, express that a key function of corporeal memorialization is to preserve the memories of the genocide in order to unambiguously combat such a crime.⁵³

Importantly, memorials which display corpses are not solely accessible to Rwandans and survivors but also members of the international community. The Genocide is largely perceived of as a failure of the interventional community to intervene and prevent against the Genocide or impede it once it had begun. Despite the adoption of the *Convention on the Prevention and*

⁵⁰ Cook, Susan E. “The Politics of Preservation in Rwanda.” *MacMillan Center Genocide Studies*, no. 27 (2004), 304.

⁵¹ Amanda Thomas, “Confronting Denial in Rwanda,” in *The MacMillan Center*, October 23, 2018, <https://macmillan.yale.edu/news/confronting-denial-rwanda>.

⁵² Grzyb, “Unsettled Memory,” 192–3.

⁵³ Ibreck, “International Constructions of National Memories,” 154.

Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948, the United Nations (UN) and its member states bore witness to the systemic violations of human rights in Rwanda and failed to adequately respond.⁵⁴ In response, the corporeal memorialization in Rwanda also seeks to allow international visitors to ‘experience’ the memorial as authentic spaces and, in turn, illicit sympathy.⁵⁵ When successful, this form of memorialization promotes a human rights culture and facilitates learning about the past in order to prevent genocide and violence in the future.⁵⁶ The corporeal memorialization in Rwanda can be deemed successful due to witness accounts and donor actions. Foremost, based on documented first-hand accounts of those who witness corporeal memorialization in Rwanda, the presence of corpses at memorials are successful promoting a recognition of universal human rights and the consequences of violating them.⁵⁷ Moreover, donors who contribute resources to the construction of memorial sites in Rwanda often do so with the explicit intention of promoting the cause of genocide prevention worldwide on the premise that international cooperation and commitment is necessary to combat genocide.⁵⁸ Simply, corporeal memorialization in Rwanda is also successful in promoting deterrence by forcing international visitors to sympathize with past grievances that their governments were apathetic about in order to incentivize anti-genocidal action in the future. Therefore, corporeal memorialization in Rwanda assists in the important post-conflict goal of deterrence at both domestic and international levels.

⁵⁴ Jeremy Sarkin and Carly Fowler, “The Responsibility to Protect and the Duty to Prevent Genocide: Lessons to Be Learned from the Role of the International Community and the Media during the Rwandan Genocide and the Conflict in the Former Yugoslavia,” *Suffolk Transnational Law Review* 33, no. 1 (2010), 2, 6.

⁵⁵ Rebecca Jinks, “Thinking Comparatively about Genocide Memorialization,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 16, no. 4 (December 2, 2014), 425.

⁵⁶ Rebecca Jinks, “Thinking Comparatively about Genocide Memorialization,” 425.

⁵⁷ Grzyb, “Unsettled Memory,” 191.

⁵⁸ Rachel, “International Constructions of National Memories,” 165.

Conclusion

The visibility of human remains is not a new phenomenon; from funeral homes to research institutes, the physical memories of human life are used for purposes varying from ceremony to science. Yet, the idea of displaying bones and bodies of genocide victims remains extremely controversial. This is particularly due to the ethical concerns that arise when human bodies are used posthumously outside funerary contexts.⁵⁹ In the Rwandan context, although some view corporeal memorialization as a fundamental aspect of truth-telling, others perceive of as a disrespectful practice which undermines the sanctity of human life. As well, some survivor groups take issue with the fact that the government claims a monopoly over memorialization and the public truth narrative.⁶⁰ Yet, the Rwandan government, international donors, and many survivor groups maintain that such forms of corporeal memorialization are the most powerful evidence of the atrocity, can prevent forgetting, and fight denial.⁶¹ Although no monolithic Rwandan perspective on corporeal memorialization exists, the potential benefits of such a program must not be overlooked. The concerns raised by survivor groups and other concerned parties must be further researched and reconciled.

In light of these aforementioned critiques, unidentifiable corporeal memorialization has been integral to the success of transitional justice in Rwanda. Foremost, it has advanced deterrence through truth-telling and providing tangible evidence of the effects of genocide. It has also ensured acknowledgement of the Genocide and diminished international apathy through its educative

⁵⁹ Élisabeth Anstett and Jean-Marc Dreyfus. “Corpses in Society: about Human Remains, Necro-Politics, Necro-Economy and the Legacy of Mass Violence,” in *Human Remains in Society: Curation and Exhibition in the Aftermath of Genocide and Mass-Violence* (Manchester, GR: Manchester University Press, 2016), 1.

⁶⁰ Hodgkin, “Reconciliation in Rwanda,” 204–05.

⁶¹ Ibreck, “The Politics of Mourning,” 338.

effect. Finally, and most importantly, it has helped Rwanda and the diverse groups which make up its population heal by providing them with an opportunity to remember and to engage in the transitional justice process. Although it is a flawed process, corporeal memorialization has still been indispensable to the recovery of the Rwandan state and peoples.

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